

## Message Text

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SUBJ: SITUATION IN THE SOUTHERN REGION

FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER FROM AMBASSADOR BRUCE

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS SECDEF, USNMR SHAPE AND USDOCOSOUTH

1. SUMMARY: THERE NOW EXISTS A CRITICAL SITUATION IN THE NATO SOUTHERN REGION--A SITUATION SO COMPLEX AND SERIOUS AS TO THREATEN THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE ALLIANCE AS WE HAVE KNOWN IT.

2. BOTH THE GENERAL POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION IN NATO'S SOUTHERN REGION AND THE STATE OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS HAVE UNDERGONE PROFOUND CHANGES SINCE THE U.S. FIRST INTRODUCED A MAJOR MILITARY PRESENCE INTO THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA OVER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO. THESE CHANGES HAVE ERODED OUR MILITARY POSITION IN THAT AREA AND THE INFLUENCE THAT WASHINGTON CAN WIELD; BUT EACH AND EVERY POLITICAL AND MILITARY COMMITMENT REMAINS UNDIMINISHED. TODAY'S CHALLENGES  
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THEREFORE ARE MORE IMPOSING THAN THOSE OF 25 YEARS AGO WHEN WEIGHED AGAINST: (1) THE STILL VALID NATO GOAL OF DETERRING THE WARSAW PACT FROM TAKING OR THREATENING TO TAKE HOSTILE ACTION AGAINST THE ALLIES; AND (2) THE UNILATERAL U.S. GOAL OF REDUCING THE

POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MAINTAINING AN ACCEPTABLE BALANCE OF POWER IN THAT UNSETTLED REGION.

3. THE MISSION BELIEVES THAT A RE-EXAMINATION OF EXISTING U.S. POLITICAL AND MILITARY COMMITMENTS TO THE SOUTHERN REGION (AND A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE U.S. AND ALLIED FORCE STRUCTURE WHICH SUPPORTS THEM) IS IN ORDER. ARE THEY STILL COMPATIBLE WITH THE U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST AND WITH ALLIANCE SECURITY REQUIREMENTS? ARE THE MILITARY FORCES AND THE U.S. COMMITMENTS WHICH WE NOW MAINTAIN IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA CONSISTENT WITH THE CHANGED AND STEADILY CHANGING ENVIRONMENT? END SUMMARY.

4. FROM THE LATE 19740S UNTIL THE MID-60S, THE MEDITERRANEAN WAS AN "AMERICAN LAKE." THE VESTIGES OF BRITISH AND FRENCH COLONIAL AND MILITARY POWER WERE STILL IN EVIDENCE, BUT THE DOMINANT FACT WAS THE UNITED STATES' PRESENCE, SYMBOLIZED BY THE SIXTH FLEET AND AN IMPRESSIVE COMPLEX OF AIR AND SEA SUPPORT FACILITIES THAT RINGED THE MEDITERRANEAN AND INTERLOCKED WITH THE MILITARY FORCES OF WILLING ALLIES WHOSE POLITICAL LEADERS TOOK HEART FROM THE IMPRESSIVE AMERICAN PRESENCE. SINCE THE MID-60S, THE MILITARY DOMINANCE OF ALLIED FORCES IN THE SOUTHERN REGION HAS DECLINED SHARPLY AND STEADILY; US MILITARY FORCES ARE OPERATING UNDER EVER-TIGHTENING RESTRAINTS. THE US INTERVENED MILITARILY ON A UNILATERAL BASIS IN LEBANON IN 1958; THE US INTERVENED UNILATERALLY IN A DIFFERENT MANNER IN JORDAN IN 1970. THERE IS NOW GOOD REASON TO DOUBT THAT AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES WILL IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE BE AS WELCOME IN THE AREA AS THEY ONCE WERE.

5. SOME OF THE MILESTONES IN THE DECLINE HAVE BEEN:

A. SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN HAS GROWN GRADUALLY AND HAS BECOME A POTENT AND PERMANENT FACT WHICH AFFECTS POPULAR ATTITUDES AND THE POLITICAL THINKING IN EVERY LITTORAL STATE; AND IT IS ONE WHICH THE US MUST ALSO TAKE INTO FULL ACCOUNT IN FRAMING POLITICAL POLICY AND DRAFTING MILITARY PLANS.

B. FRANCES WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO IN 1966 WEAKENED THE ALLIANCE'S SECRET

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MILITARY POSITION APPRECIABLE. FRENCH NAVAL UNITS HAVE CONTINUED TO COOPERATE BILATERALLY OR MULTILATERALLY WITH VARIOUS ALLIES IN SOME EXERCISES--AND EVEN IN CERTAIN EXERCISES THAT WERE IN FACT NATO EXERCISES. HOWEVER, FRANCES CONTRIBUTION TO COORDINATED DEFENSE IN THE REGION IS LESS THAN COMPLETE AND IT IS STILL SORELY MISSED.

C. THE ALLIES HAVE LOST ALMOST ALL OF THEIR MILITARY FACILITIES IN NORTH AFRICA: EGYPT, LIBYA, TUNISIA, ALGERIA, MOROCCO. IN MOST RECENT TIMES THE ENFORCED WITHDRAWAL OF THE US AIR FORCE AND THE BRITISH ARMY FROM LIBYA FOLLOWED BY THE EXPULSION OF UK FORCES FROM MALTA HAS SEVERELY REDUCED THE INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABLE TO THOSE MOBILE ALLIED UNITS WHICH ARE SO IMPORTANT

TO THE COMMON DEFENSE.

D. THE TRIPARTITE DECLARATION OF 1950 (US-UK-FRANCE) NOW LIES IN THE ARCHIVES. EVER SINCE IT LOST POLITICAL VALIDITY, THE ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE HAS DIVIDED THE ALLIES. THAT DISAGREEMENT MANIFESTED ITSELF FIRST IN ONE FORM DURING THE 1956 SUEZ CRISIS; IT SURFACED AGAIN ELEVEN YEARS LATER IN A TOTALLY DIFFERENT FORM AND ONLY BRIEFLY DURING THE SIX DAYS' WAR. HOWEVER, IN THE 1973 CONFLICT MOST EUROPEAN ALLIES, YIELDING TO EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL PRESSURES ALLOWED THE WHOLE WORLD TO SEE THEIR OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION TO US POLICIES. THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE ALLIES TO ALLOW THE US TO USE AMERICAN FORCES AND AMERICAN SUPPLIES POSITIONED IN EUROPE EFFECTIVELY DENIED WASHINGTON THE USE OF THE CONTINENT AS A STAGING AREA FOR NON-NATO RELATED PURPOSES. SIMILAR RECALCITRANCE BY ALLIED GOVERNMENTS IN THE FUTURE REMAINS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY - AND WOULD NOT BE WITHOUT SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES.

E. ITALY HAS RECENTLY CUT ITS DEFENSE BUDGET, POSTPONING INDEFINITELY THE PROCUREMENT OF BADLY NEEDED MODERN EQUIPMENT, AND THUS FURTHER REDUCING HER CONTRIBUTION TO COLLECTIVE DEFENSE.

F. GREECE WITHDREW THE HELLENIC ARMED FORCES FROM THE ALLIED INTEGRATED MILITARY STRUCTURE LAST SUMMER IN AN AMBIGUOUS MANNER THAT IS YET TO BE FULLY DEFINED; AND ATHENS HAS NOW BEGUN TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE US ON THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN MILITARY BASES. IN ANY EVENT, ALLIANCE DEFENSES ARE WEAKER THAN THEY WERE BEFORE CYPRUS.

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G. ECONOMIC PRESSURES ARE UNDERCUTTING THE DEFENSE EFFORT OF ALL THE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN ALLIES. THOSE SAME PRESSURES HAVE ALSO COMPELLED THE UK WHICH HAS TRADITIONALLY MADE A SUBSTANTIAL FIXED AND MOBILE CONTRIBUTION TO THE COLLECTIVE DEFENSE OF THE AREA, TO DECIDE TO PHASE OUT THE BRITISH MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

6. TRENDS PRESENTLY VISIBLE POINT TO A FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THE SOUTHERN REGION:

A. BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL TIES WITH TURKEY HAVE BEEN WEAKENED AS A RESULT OF THE EVENTS IN CYPRUS AND THE ENSUING STALEMATE; AND THE CONGRESSIONAL BAN ON MILITARY AID AND MILITARY SALES TO TURKEY HAS FURTHER IRRITATED THOSE RELATIONS.

B. THE CYPRUS DISPUTE HAS CAUSED THE GREEK GOVERNMENT TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WHICH MUST, ALMOST INEVITABLY, LEAD TO CLOSING OF CERTAIN US AND NATO MILITARY BASES IN GREECE; BOTH WASHINGTON AND NATO APPEAR TO BE ABOUT TO ENGAGE IN WHAT ONE MIGHT FAIRLY DESCRIBE AS A DAMAGE-LIMITING OPERATION.

C. HMG'S DECISION TO PHASE OUT ITS MEDITERRANEAN DEFENSE

ROLE AND TO SLASH MOBILE FORCES MAINTAINED IN THE UK WILL STRAIN THE CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE CAPABILITIES OF ITALY, GREECE AND TURKEY AND IT WILL LEAVE THE US AS THE ONLY NON-LITTORAL WESTERN ALLY WITH SIGNIFICANT MILITARY UNITS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

D. POLITICAL TRENDS IN LISBON HAVE MADE PORTUGAL A LESS RELIABLE ALLY; THE FUTURE OF THE AZORES BASE AWAITS NEGOTIATION.

E. GOVERNMENTS INSTABILITY IN ITALY GREATLY DIMINISHES THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY STRENGTH OF THE ALLIANCE. IN TIMES PAST ROME GAVE ALMOST AUTOMATIC COOPERATION TO US AND NATO INITIATIVES; BUT NOW THE GOI EVIDENCES INDECISION AND EVEN RELUCTANCE TO ENGAGE IN SUCH SHARED ENDEAVORS.

F. WHEN GENERAL FRANCO DEPARTS THE SCENE IN SPAIN, THOSE WHO SUCCEED TO POWER MAY LEAVE THE US-SPAIN RELATIONSHIP UNTOUCHED; BUT IT SEEMS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THEY WILL GIVE THE SECRET

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US MILITARY ACCESS TO THE SPANISH BASES ON THE TERMS NOW PREVAILING. AND THE PRESENT TERMS THEMSELVES REMAIN TO BE DETERMINED DURING THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS LOOKING TO THE REPLACEMENT OR EXTENSION IN SOME FORM OF THE 1970 US-SPAIN BILATERAL AGREEMENT.

G. THE SOVIET UNION HAS ESTABLISHED A POLITICAL AND MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN; AND IT APPEARS TO BE A PERMANENT ONE. MOSCOW CONTINUES TO MODERNIZE ITS NAVAL UNITS; AND THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE SOVIET NAVY WILL INCREASE APPRECIABLY FOLLOWING THE REOPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL.

H. FEW WOULD DARE TO SPECULATE ON THE LIKELY COURSE OF EVENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA AFTER MARSHAL TITO. BUT DOMESTIC INSTABILITY OR A SUDDEN POLICY LURCH IN THE BALKANS COULD TRANSFORM THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN THE ENTIRE SOUTHERN REGION.

7. THE PRESENT US FORCE STRUCTURE IN THE SOUTHERN REGION IS AN AMALGAM RESULTING FROM MANY DECISIONS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO MANY CHALLENGES OVER MANY YEARS. AND THAT PRESENT US FORCES STRUCTURE CONSTITUTES ALL THE BACKBONE AND MUCH OF THE SINEW OF THE NATO DETERRENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA. IN FACT, THE RELATIVE US CONTRIBUTION TO DETERRENCE AGAINST CONVENTIONAL ATTACK IS MARKEDLY GREATER IN THE SOUTH THAN IN THE CENTRAL REGION WHERE STRONG, MODERN, WELL-EQUIPPED FRG UNITS STAND READY TO OFFER STIFF RESISTANCE TO ANY DEMONSTRABLE THREAT. SOME 60,000 US MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE IN THE SOUTHERN REGION, AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

8. IT IS NOT EASY TO QUANTIFY THE COST TO THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER OF THE US COMMITMENT TO NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK. ACCORDING TO ONE AUTHORITATIVE STUDY, THE OPERATING COST OF US LAND, SEA AND AIR FORCES STATIONED IN THE ENTIRE EUROPEAN AREA, INCLUDING THE

SIXTH FLEET, AS ABOUT \$4 BILLION IN FY 73. TO THIS FIGURE, THE AUTHORS OF THAT STUDY ADDED THE COST OF THE US-BASED SUPPORT (COST OF NEW EQUIPMENT, LOGISTICS, ETC) FOR THOSE SAME UNITS. THEY THUS REACHED A TOTAL BUDGETARY COST OF \$7 BILLION PER ANNUM FOR US FORCES IN THE EUROPEAN AREA. ASSUMING A 20 PERCENT SHARE FOR THE SOUTHERN REGION, WE CAN ESTIMATE TOTAL BUDGETARY COSTS THERE AT BETWEEN \$1.5 BILLION AND \$2 BILLION ANNUALLY. OTHER COSTS, BOTH PAST AND PRESENT, GREATLY ADD TO THE TOTAL US FINANCIAL DRAIN INTO THE AREA. THESE INCLUDE: MILITARY

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ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS; CONCESSIONAL FOREIGN MILITARY SALES; THE MALTA BLACKMAIL; AID TO MOROCCO STEMMING FROM OUR MILITARY PRESENCE THERE; CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF US FACILITIES AND INSTALLATIONS; US CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATO INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS IN THE AREA; AND FINALLY ISRAEL'S HUGE REQUIREMENTS IN ACHIEVING A MIDDLE EAST MILITARY BALANCE.

9. AS AGAINST THOSE SUBSTANTIAL ANNUAL BUDGETARY OUTLAYS, ONE MUST LOOK AT THE EQUALLY SUBSTANTIAL US POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY STAKE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE RIMLANDS AND THE HINTERLANDS THAT ADJOIN IT. THE FURNISHING OF THESE RESOURCES HAS YIELDED OVER THE DECADES GREATER SECURITY AND ENHANCED POLITICAL INFLUENCE OVER POLICY DECISIONS OF FRIENDLY NON-ALLIGNED FOREIGN STATES THANKS TO ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY AND AMPLIFIED COLLECTIVE INTEGRATED MILITARY CAPABILITY; AND HAS ALSO FACILITATED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF US NATIONAL OBJECTIVES BEYOND THE LIMITS OF THE NATO TREATY AREA. THE TASK NOW IS TO RE-EVALUATE THE ASSETS AND LIABILITIES LISTED ON THE SOUTHERN REGION BALANCE SHEET, RE-EXAMINE THE OPERATION IN ITS ENTIRETY IN THE LIGHT OF CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, HAZARD A SCHRWD GUESS ON FUTURE BENEFITS THAT WILL LIKELY ACCRUE TO THE US-- AND THEN UTILIZE US AND NATO RESOURCES JOINTLY TO ACHIEVE OUR NATIONAL ENDS. SUCH A TOUGH MINDED RE-EXAMINATION MIGHT BEGIN BY SEEKING ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW:

A. RELATIONSHIP OF THE SOUTHERN REGION TO OVERALL U.S. SECURITY INTERESTS.

--WHAT IS THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE OF A LARGE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE SOUTHERN REGION?

--HOW LARGE A U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE SOUTHERN REGION IS NEEDED TO SUPPORT THE ALLIANCE'S POSTURE OF DETERRENCE AND DEFENSE IN THE CENTER?

-- WHAT LEVEL AND WHAT TYPE OF U.S. MILITARY FORCE IS NEEDED AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO THE PERMANENT SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE SOUTHERN REGION? HOW IMPORTANT IS THAT COUNTERWEIGHT IN THE OVERALL U.S. - SOVIET CONTEXT?

--WHAT IS THE REAL POLITICAL AND MILITARY IMPORTANCE TO THE U.S. OF CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IN THE NATO INTEGRATED REPEATED INTEGRATED MILITARY STRUCTURE BY PORTUGAL, GREECE, TURKEY, ITALY?

--HOW DO THE SOVIETS PERCEIVE THE STEADILY DETERIORATING

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WESTERN POLITICAL/MILITARY POSTURE IN THE REGION?

--ARE U.S. MILITARY FUNCTIONS IN SOUTHERN REGION DEFENSE (DEFENSE OF SEA LOC'S--INCLUDING ASW AND ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE, MERCHANT AND NAVAL SHIPPING SURVEILLANCE AND INTERDICTION, AS WELL AS STRIKE/AMPHIBIOUS AND REINFORCEMENT CAPABILITIES) ORIENTED TO REAL AND PRESENTLY PERCEIVED THREATS? IS THE U.S. FORCE MIX SUPPLEMENTED BY ALLIED MILITARY UNITS CORRECT FOR CARRYING OUT THESE FUNCTIONS?

--COULD ONE OR MORE OF THESE FUNCTIONS BE DISCHARGED BY ALLIED MILITARY UNITS, PARTICULARLY THE FRENCH?

B. MIDDLEEAST ASPECTS

--WHAT ROLE DO U.S. AND/OR ALLIED MILITARY FORCES PLAY IN SUPPORT OF U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICIES IN RELATION TO ISRAEL AND THE ARAB OIL PRODUCERS?

--WHAT LEVEL AND TYPES OF U.S. FORCES ARE BEST SUITED TO REINFORCE U.S. POLICIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

--WHAT DEGREE OF ACCESS TO MILITARY FACILITIES AND BASES ON ALLIED SOIL IS VITAL TO SUPPORT U.S. COMMITMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

--WILL THE PRESENT AND FUTURE MILITARY BUILDUP IN IRAN AFFECT THE U.S. FORCE STRUCTURE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA? WHAT ARE ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CENTO?

--WHAT ARE THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. AND ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES FLOWING FROM THE ACQUISITION OF LARGE ARSENALS OF MODERN EQUIPMENT BY SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER ARAB OILPRODUCERS?

C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNIDIMINISHED SECURITY.

--WHAT ARE THE GENERAL IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGY AND DEPLOYMENT MODES FOR FUTURE U.S. FORCE AND U.S. BASE STRUCTURES IN THE AREA? FOR ALLIED FORCES?

--CAN MODERN MISSILE SYSTEMS TAKE OVER SOME OR ALL FUNCTIONS OF TACTICAL AIRCRAFT (E.G., QRA IN GREECE AND TURKEY)?

--WILL THE "AIRLIFT REVOLUTION" REDUCE THE NEED FOR U.S. AND ALLIED BASES IN THE REGION? HOW?

--CAN REMOTE SENSORS SUBSTITUTE FOR PRESENT U.S. DEPENDENCE ON GROUND SITES FOR INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION (E.G., IN TURKEY)?

--WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR AND POSSIBLE BENEFITS FROM RATIONALIZATION OF DEFENSE TASKS IN THE SOUTHERN REGION? CAN ITALY, FOR EXAMPLE, MODERNIZE ITS KEY FORCES BY REDUCING EXPENDITURES IN OTHERS? CAN NATO BY MODERNIZING ITS COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMAND AND CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS REDUCE OVERHEAD AND IMPROVE TEETH-TO-TAIL RATIO OF SOUTHERN ALLIES?

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-- WHAT TYPES OF REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS -- WHICH COULD SUPPLEMENT OR COMPLEMENT SALT AND MBFR -- MIGHT SERVE US AND ALLIED INTERESTS? WHAT BENEFITS AND RISKS WOULD THEY ENTAIL? DOES THE US STILL SWING SUFFICIENT POLITICO-MILITARY WEIGHT AMONG THE LITTORAL STATES OF THE REGION TO RENDER ARMS CONTROL

NEGOTIATIONS PRODUCTIVE?

10. FOR PERHAPS TOO MANY YEARS NATO (AND THE ALLIED GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING THE US) HAS DEVELOPED THE HABIT OF TREATING EACH DEVELOPMENT AND EACH CRISIS IN THE SOUTHERN REGION ON ITS OWN MERITS. THIS APPROACH IS QUESTIONABLE, PARTICULARLY SINCE CHANGE IN THE REGION IS NOW ACCELERATING. THE TIME IS RIPE FOR THE US AS THE LEADER OF THE ALLIANCE TO BEGIN A THOROUGH, REGIONAL STOCKTAKING, TO ADDRESS FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS, INCLUDING THOSE SKETCHED ABOVE, WITH THE OBJECT OF DEVELOPING A LONG-TERM REGIONAL PLAN DESIGNED TO COPE WITH THE CHANGED ENVIRONMENT. CONTINUING WITHOUT THOROUGHLY RE-EXAMINING OUR CURRENT POLICIES IN THIS AREA THE BUSINESS-AS-USUAL APPROACH IS UNLIKELY TO SERVE THE LONG-TERM NATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE US OR OF OUR ALLIES.

11. ACTION REQUESTED: I RECOMMEND THAT WASHINGTON UNDERTAKE JUST SUCH A BASIC POLICY REVIEW AND THAT IT ASSIGN SUCH STUDIES HIGH PRIORITY.

12. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO EMBASSIES ANKARA, ATHENS, BONN, LISBON, LONDON, MADRID, MOSCOW, PARIS, ROME, AMONG OTHERS, TO INVITE THEIR COMMENTS.  
BRUCE UNQUOTE  
INGERSOLL

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